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Security Council

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Provisional

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Friday, 21 September 2001, 4.50 p.m.
New York

President	Mr. Levitte	(France)
Members	Bangladesh	Mr. Amin
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Chaouachi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Hume

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the situation in the Central African Republic pursuant to the statement by the President (S/2001/886).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-54506 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the situation in the Central African Republic pursuant to the statement by the President (S/2001/886)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Belgium, the Central African Republic and Egypt, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. De Loecker (Belgium), Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) and Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to General Cissé, Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Bangui, the Central African Republic.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Cissé to take a seat at the Council table.

Also in accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Robert Calderisi, Country Director of the World Bank.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Calderisi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic pursuant to the statement by the President, document S/2001/886.

As there is no list of speakers for the Council members, I invite Council members who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat as of now.

Following statements by the Council members, I will give the floor to those Member States that have inscribed themselves on the list of speakers to speak under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Before giving the floor to those that wish to speak, I invite Council members to hear the briefings by Mr. Cissé, the Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Bangui, the Central African Republic, and by Mr. Calderisi, Country Director of the World Bank.

I now give the floor to the Representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Cissé (*spoke in French*): I have the great honour today of presenting to the Security Council the report of the Secretary-General, document S/2001/886, of 18 September 2001. This report was submitted pursuant to the request from the Security Council, following the presidential statement of 2 July requesting that by 30 September 2001, proposals be submitted on what the Council should do to help the Central African Republic and to strengthen the Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA).

I shall relate the main elements of the report on the situation in the Central African Republic, including a number of recommendations on assistance for recovery in the Central African Republic and for strengthening the role of BONUCA.

Let me first describe the current situation in the Central African Republic: the political, economic, security issues. Then I shall speak about assistance for economic recovery in the Central African Republic and about strengthening of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic.

Since the attempted coup of 28 May 2001, the Central African Republic authorities have sought, with the help of various partners, to normalize the serious situation that arose as a result of that attempt to destabilize institutions. In the political arena, the easing of the tension caused by the attempted coup is noticeable but can only become final once legal action has been completed against the instigators of the coup attempt. The investigation commission created for this purpose will be soon be completing its work, and the trial of the instigators will begin soon.

BONUCA has undertaken facilitation and mediation efforts aimed at bringing together the various political forces in the country. The authorities have also, at BONUCA's urging, sought to create an atmosphere of greater trust, calm and reconciliation. BONUCA will continue to work on creating an atmosphere of tolerance among all those involved in politics there.

In the social sphere, the dialogue between the Government and the trade unions, broken off in mid-May 2001, has now resumed within the context of the follow-up and arbitration committee.

In the area of economics, the economic impact of the attempted coup has been devastating. The authorities have not been able to pay their exterior debt, including payments to the World Bank, which suspended disbursements on 14 August 2001. The Government has prepared various plans to obtain emergency assistance from the international community. In its efforts to achieve economic recovery, it convened from 10 to 12 September the first national meetings on the economy and finances of the Central African Republic.

Insecurity still prevails in Bangui and within the country. The authorities have made significant efforts, however, to restore security, particularly in the capital. In this context, most Central Africans who had sought refuge in the French and United States embassies after the attempted coup have been able to leave and resume their lives. The Government remains concerned, however, by the presence in Zongo, a village across the river from Bangui in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of approximately 23,000 civilian and military refugees. Removing those people from the common border is the only way of easing the concerns of Central African authorities. Consideration is now being given by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to transferring them to another site.

With respect to assistance in the recovery of the Central African Republic, the report before the Council stresses the poverty of the country, which has been exacerbated by the frequent unrest experienced by the country in recent years. That is why the Secretary-General recommends that the international community provide the Central African Republic with prompt and massive assistance in many areas: the economy, human resources, training, security and institutional support.

In his recommendations, the Secretary-General stresses in particular the specific nature of the case of the Central African Republic and encourages the Bretton Woods institutions to demonstrate exceptional solicitude in the implementation of economic programmes agreed upon with the Government. He also urges partners to make available economic and financial experts to the Central African Republic and to help the authorities in the priority computerization of financial records. I would recall in this connection the World Bank's support programme for economic policies and the African Development Bank's institutional support project, which is in the course of being drafted. This assistance will enable the Government to carry out the stringent management policy that it is committed to implementing, as was affirmed by the Prime Minister in his general policy statement. Measures to mobilize income and structural reform will allow growth to resume.

The Secretary-General's report also stresses that security assistance is expected from the outside world. The restructuring of the defence and security forces, the collection of weapons, support for infrastructural matters and redeployment, and the recruitment, training and equipping of new contingents are all areas in which the active cooperation of partners is required. That is why, while thanking those States that have honoured the commitments they undertook at the special meeting in New York in May 2000, the Secretary-General calls upon the other partners who had made similar commitments to honour them.

Since the attempted coup led to the proliferation of weapons in Bangui and elsewhere in the country, the Government — which recently created a Ministry entrusted specifically with restructuring — should be encouraged in its efforts to restructure and train the defence and security forces and to disarm civilians.

Given the new context created by the coup in the Central African Republic, the current report recommends the strengthening of the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), as laid out in the Secretary-General's letter to the President of the Security Council dated 3 December 1999 and the presidential statement of the Security Council of 10 February 2000.

The Secretary-General therefore recommends to the members of the Security Council a strengthening of the Office's role in its various activities to support peace-building. He suggests that the Council use its good offices, offer its services as a mediator, monitor the security situation, promote human rights and provide political support for the mobilization of resources. He particularly recommends strengthening the human rights unit and the establishment of an early-warning system.

The mandate review that the Secretary-General proposes to the Council contains the following innovations. At the political level, emphasis is placed on assistance to the Monitoring and Arbitration Committee for the effective implementation of the provisions of the 1998 National Reconciliation Pact. Similarly, the Office is called on to play a more active role in the political and social dialogue with a view to creating an atmosphere of tolerance among the players on the political scene.

In the area of security, it is proposed that BONUCA, with the assistance of other agencies of the United Nations system, promote the implementation of an effective arms-collection programme with the support of its partners. The mandate would also include the implementation, for the benefit of the armed forces, a programme of education for a culture of peace and respect for the institutions of the Republic.

In the area of civilian police, the new elements include support for the police and gendarmerie, training for new recruits and technical assistance to authorities in the area of public order and crime control.

In the area of human rights, the report calls for judicial assistance to victims of human rights violations; strengthening human rights education for all sectors of society; extending these activities to the interior of the country; and support for the efforts of other partners aimed at strengthening the judicial system and the rule of law.

The Secretary-General also recommends that the Council extend BONUCA's mandate, which will expire on 31 December 2001, for another year.

In conclusion, I wish to stress the following points. The implementation of the revised BONUCA mandate will naturally require a significant increase in its resources to cover the costs of the proposed new activities. The strengthening of the human rights unit will allow it to undertake the extra tasks of monitoring, investigation, training and judicial assistance made necessary by the situation arising out of the attempted coup. The establishment of an early-warning system would also seem to be crucial in light of the lessons learned from that attempt.

In his most recent report to the Council, the Secretary-General stressed that, in the final analysis, it is poverty that gives rise to instability in the Central African Republic and that, to a large extent, it is the State's financial problems that have made the economic and political situation so precarious. The attempted coup of 28 May exacerbated the situation to such an extent that the Central African Republic is now almost completely devastated. The Secretary-General calls on all the country's partners to provide emergency assistance commensurate with the emergency situation in the country. He also expresses the hope that the forthcoming meeting between the Bretton Woods institutions and the Central African Government and the donor meeting to follow will solidify the solidarity of the international community with the Central African Republic. In this connection the Security Council might encourage bilateral and multilateral partners to be very active at the donors meeting. Broad participation there is all the more necessary in that the Central African Republic will benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in 2002, at the earliest.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to Mr. Robert Calderisi, Country Director at the World Bank.

Mr. Calderisi: We are grateful for this opportunity to address the Council. Like other specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the World Bank has been very concerned about the situation in the Central African Republic. In conjunction with the International Monetary Fund, we have been trying to help the Government improve its economic management and to lay the basis for serious efforts to improve the lives of its people.

Conflicts within and outside the country's borders have complicated those efforts, but, fortunately, they have not stalled them altogether.

In our statement to this body on 23 January of this year, we said that we had confidence in the then-Prime Minister and his economic team, that they had a clear sense of their country's interests and that they were effective in defending those interests internally and externally. That assessment remains true today, despite changes in the Government since then and the sad events of late May and early June.

In my three visits to the country in the last year, including one just two weeks after the attempted coup d'état — when fear and insecurity were still high — I have been impressed by the courage and determination of senior decision makers. Despite difficulties that would perplex and frustrate many of us around this table, the Prime Minister and his colleagues have kept their sights trained on medium- and long-term issues that will be important for strengthening growth and reducing poverty.

A good example of this was the holding of a national economic conference nine days ago, which involved about 500 participants from across the country and was an important act of national reconciliation, not just public discussion of important policy choices.

Another example has been the rapid preparation of a national program for fighting HIV/AIDS, for which the World Bank completed negotiations of a $17 million credit last week.

There is similar focus and similar openness to new ideas in the community more broadly. In meetings with the business community, trade unionists, young people and women's groups, I have found an impatience to move forward, rather than a sense of resignation that the country's problems are insurmountable.

In the months ahead, the World Bank hopes to contribute to solving those problems, through supplementary support for the national budget, linked to reforms already underway for strengthening public finances; through approval of a post-conflict grant to fund emergency needs arising from the events of late May; through analytical support for the preparation of a solid poverty reduction strategy necessary in its own right and as a means of obtaining debt relief from the international community, drawing on resources provided under the Policy Support Project approved last year; and also through early implementation of the HIV/AIDS project, in which half of the resources will go directly to local communities.

Looking beyond the next six months, three points remain important. A sound economy is essential for underpinning peace-building efforts. Secondly, the entire United Nations community must continue to work together to help the country. And third, outsiders can only do so much.

Public revenues in the Central African Republic were sagging from an already low level in April — before the coup d'état. Political events have worsened but have not fundamentally altered the economic challenge. Bold efforts by the Government to improve public management and strengthen governance will create new opportunities for the people of the Central African Republic and attack the roots of conflict once and for all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to the speakers inscribed on my list. Everyone is well aware of the late hour at which we have arrived, and so I hope everyone will understand if I make an appeal to all to be brief and to focus on their essential message.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized an open meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Central African Republic.

Mali, as you know, has worked hard to bring about a settlement of the situation in Central African Republic, in particular through the tireless and ever-successful efforts of General Amadou Toumani Touré.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report and General Lamine Cissé, the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central

African Republic for his briefing that complements that report.

Lastly, I want to welcome the presence here at the Council table of representatives of international financial institutions. This bears witness to the importance attached by those institutions to the recovery of the Central African Republic.

The diagnosis of the situation in the Central African Republic is familiar enough; it was well described in the report of the Secretary-General and was eloquently recalled by General Cissé just a moment ago in his briefing. I shall, therefore, not refer to that. What I do wish to do — and in response to your wish, Mr. President — is focus on the operational conclusions that they both drew.

I would like to refer, first of all, to the need to design a coherent programme to contribute to the recovery of the Central African Republic. It is indeed essential to correct the many areas of dysfunction and the structural problems of the country. The crucial questions of payment of foreign debt, the payment of salary arrears in the civil service and the further restructuring of the armed forces are of the highest priority. It goes without saying that an important effort from the international community to this end will be necessary. This should be done in exercise of the duty of solidarity, in particular at the meeting that is scheduled to take place in Paris starting on 24 September 2001.

Secondly, I would like to address the strengthening of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). My delegation shares the views expressed in this respect by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 22 on in his report. I want to say that we completely support the recommendations that result from his assessment. This is first of all because the strengthening of BONUCA, as was very well recalled by General Cissé, should contribute to achieving political dialogue and national reconciliation.

By providing, in particular, needed support for the implementation of the provisions of the National Reconciliation Pact of 1998 and the genuine functioning of the Monitoring and Arbitration Committee, BONUCA will make it possible for Central Africans to preserve their unity, thus contributing to political stabilization of the Central African Republic, which in turn is essential for subregional stability.

The strengthening of the BONUCA mandate should make it possible to ensure better monitoring of the security situation. Its role will now be crucial, particularly in the restructuring of the defence and security forces and in the implementation of the national programme for support of development and redeployment and the programme for the collection of small arms.

Strengthening the human rights component of BONUCA should — and the General has emphasized this — make it possible for it to deal with the monitoring, information-gathering, training and judicial assistance tasks that are required because of the situation resulting from the attempted coup of 28 May 2001.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's full support for BONUCA, which, in my delegation's view, should have the capacity necessary to act to meet the many complex challenges of the situation in the Central African Republic. The strengthening of its mandate will be an important stage in the continuation of the peace and national reconciliation process in the Central African Republic. This is why we completely support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the BONUCA mandate be extended for another year.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): First of all, I would like to commend the French presidency for initiating the public format of today's discussion. I wish to welcome the Secretary-General's Representative in the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), General Lamine Cissé, and the Country Director of the World Bank, Mr. Robert Calderisi.

We entirely share General Cissé's analysis of the specific nature of the situation in the country, which has been gravely affected by the attempted coup d'état. The absence of political dialogue, social tensions, economic decline, insecurity within the regional context, refugee problems — all these characteristics of the current situation in the Central African Republic raise serious concerns. The alarming rate of the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Central African Republic adds to these concerns.

Under these circumstances, the situation in the Central African Republic requires an immediate concerted response aimed at finding long-lasting solutions to the numerous challenges facing post-

conflict peace-building in the country. In our view, it also represents a test case for the United Nations system and the international community with regard to the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated peace-building strategy.

There are a number of challenges before the Government of the Central African Republic and the international community to reduce potential risks of instability, particularly in the spheres of economic and social recovery, improvement of political environment, public administration and finances and the protection and promotion of human rights. The importance of completing the restructuring of the defence and security forces and the collection of weapons remains high on the peace-building agenda in the country.

Another area of which the Security Council should be extremely vigilant is the situation's subregional dimension and the links between the resumption of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and stability in the Central African Republic. We commend the Secretary-General's attention to the importance of continued close coordination between the representatives in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Given the specificity and the complexity of the peace-building strategy for the country, we highly commend the comprehensive action plan proposed by the Secretary-General, to be implemented by the United Nations and the international community in support of the Government's efforts towards consolidation of peace and economic recovery. Taking into account that some of the Secretary-General's recommendations are directly linked to development aspects, we believe it would be useful if those recommendations were brought to the attention of other relevant bodies of the United Nations family for consideration.

We highly appreciate the activities of BONUCA aimed at strengthening the capacity of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, reform of the armed forces, consolidation of peace and the democratic process and facilitating mobilization of international political support and resources for national reconstruction and economic recovery. We believe that strengthened activities of BONUCA, in cooperation with the national authorities, in coordination with the agencies of the United Nations system present in the country and in interaction with international financial institutions and development partners will further contribute to the successful implementation of the peace-building strategy in the Central African Republic.

While noting an urgent need for external assistance to the country, we also believe that the key to long-term stability in the country lies with the Central Africans themselves. At the same time, we strongly maintain that the international community should remain effectively engaged in the country if we are to achieve sustainable peace, stability and development in the Central African Republic. Today we have a clear plan, and we need to proceed with real action.

Finally, we hope that today's discussion will provide a significant impetus to mobilizing international, political and financial commitments in support of post-conflict peace-building in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Chaouachi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting and to associate myself with the words of welcome and thanks addressed to General Lamine Cissé, the Secretary-General's Representative and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic, for the briefing that he has just given, which gives us a clear picture of the current situation in that country. We are also grateful for the actions being undertaken by the Office in many areas. We also thank Mr. Calderisi for his briefing.

Despite the remarkable progress since the end of the 1996 crisis and the sustained efforts of all actors involved, the situation in that country remains fragile and the achievements made since then in the political and security fields are being steadily weakened. The efforts of the Central African Republic Government to improve the socio-economic situation are also increasingly being put to the test.

Unfortunately, last May's attempted coup d'état only confirms our fears and heightens our concern. While it is true that it is primarily up to the Central Africans themselves to work to restore the political, economic and social stability of their country, it is also true that the alarming situation in the Central African Republic at present requires from donors and the international community, as was rightly stressed by the

Secretary-General in his report, emergency assistance that will make it possible for the Central African Government to establish its authority, to deal with its priority needs and to calm the widening social tension. In this respect, we commend the many initiatives taken by the Government and we associate ourselves with the Secretary-General in urging that these efforts be strengthened by adequate financial and technical international assistance.

In this regard, it is important that the World Bank resume its disbursements and that Member States that announced pledges here in May 2000 honour their commitments. Technical assistance that makes it possible to train civil servants and economic affairs personnel is also important. Support for the organization of local elections would also certainly strengthen national unity and would consolidate the democratic process in that country. International solidarity is clearly highly desirable, but, I repeat, it must serve as a valuable form of support for Central African resolve and for a strong national effort. I must say that the security situation in the Central African Republic concerns us greatly.

The increase in the number of light weapons in the country and the escape of the coup plotters show that the risk of destabilization is still present and that the Government of the Central African Republic must remain watchful. We therefore believe that it is important to strengthen the process of collecting and confiscating such weapons and to strengthen the plan for the reintegration of refugees and for assistance for their return and to continue the restructuring of the defence and security forces; the stability of the country depends on this.

The search for a definitive solution to all of these security, humanitarian and socio-economic problems in the Central African Republic should also take place in the framework of an overall subregional approach, taking into account, inter alia, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I should like to welcome the considerable efforts being made by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). We are convinced that its presence and its activities are of great help for both the Government and the population of the Central African Republic. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the strengthening of the structures and capacity of BONUCA so as to make its efforts more effective and enable it to work, together with the Government of the Central African Republic, to establish lasting peace in that country.

Mr. Hume (United States of America): We, too, are very grateful for the briefings that we have received. We are encouraged that there is at least some information in the report that indicates that there are elements of the situation that have been improving — particularly the decrease in political violence and in human rights abuses.

The United States Government condemned the May coup attempt. An attack against a democratically elected Government is an attack against the will of the people and cannot be condoned. But we equally condemned human rights abuses, including numerous cases of extra-judicial violence on the part of the Government following the attempted coup. In our view, the Council should hold President Patassé to his pledge of 8 June. The trials of those allegedly involved in the coup attempt will be held under transparent conditions in the presence of international observers.

The second point I would like to make is one that has just been made and relates to the need to aid refugees. From our Embassy in Bangui, we understand that there are 25,000 refugees who fled the Central African Republic, of whom a very small number were involved in violence associated with the coup attempt. We believe that the Government of the Central African Republic must demonstrate to those refugees, through its actions, that they will not be harmed if they return. For these refugees to return home, the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be open. It is equally important that there be no hampering of the distribution of aid to refugees.

The third point I would like to address relates to the strengthening of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). First of all, to the extent that the proposals before us can be implemented within existing resources, we would encourage early action. In terms of where we go beyond that, we have conveyed the additional proposals to Washington. In some cases we will seek additional clarification on renewing and extending the mandate of BONUCA. The mandate will remain in place until December, and obviously as we

get closer to that date we will be able to look at this in a more practical way.

Fundamentally, the possibility of increasing the resources for BONUCA depends on the commitment on the part of the Government of the Central African Republic to work with BONUCA and to demonstrate progress in improving the domestic political dialogue. Frankly, we have yet to see the kind of serious commitment from the Government that would be needed to move that forward.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like at the outset to thank General Cissé and the representative of the World Bank, Robert Calderisi, for their briefings.

China is concerned about the serious political, economic, social and security situation in the Central African Republic. We are particularly worried about the stalemate in the political dialogue, the deteriorating financial situation and the serious, worsening, security and humanitarian problems in that country. China believes that the international community should assist the Government of the Central African Republic in its efforts to tackle problems in the following three areas.

First, the political situation should be stabilized. Political dialogue between the Government and the opposition should be restored as soon as possible. This is critical to stabilizing the situation there. It is encouraging that the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) has come to understand the importance of political dialogue and is making efforts in this regard.

Secondly, assistance to the Central African Republic should be reinforced. We have learned that since mid-August the World Bank has suspended its assistance to the Central African Republic because that country has not been able to make its payments. We would like to express our concern in this regard, and hope that the two sides can resolve the problem of the arrears as soon as possible.

We call upon the Bretton Woods institutions and the international community to continue to provide emergency assistance to the Central African Republic. Given the current situation, we call upon the donors to fulfil their pledges. China will continue to provide the Central African Republic with assistance, within its means, through bilateral channels.

The Parliament of the Central African Republic recently adopted new investment laws. This is an important step by the Government, aimed at improving the environment for investment. We believe that it will be of benefit in creating an environment for international partners to provide the Government with the means, including funds and technical assistance, that it needs. Furthermore, the Government has also adopted three action plans in the areas of the economy and humanitarian affairs. We hope that donors will respond favourably to those plans.

Thirdly, efforts for restructuring the armed forces and disarming illegal armed elements should be accelerated. Since the coup attempt in May, the number of illegally owned arms inside the Central African Republic has been increasing. The security situation is worsening. This situation has seriously hampered the recovery efforts of the Central African Republic. Given the limited capacity and resources of the Government, we hope that the relevant partners will continue to provide funds, technology and experts to assist the Government in its efforts to disarm the armed elements, restructure the armed forces and train the police force and gendarmerie.

The Central African Republic is enjoying an increasingly close relationship with neighbouring countries with regard to security and refugees. It is wise and appropriate for the Security Council to take a regional and comprehensive approach in considering this question. In this context, we would like to commend the Secretary-General for his decision to strengthen the cooperation between United Nations representatives in Kinshasa and Bangui, and we encourage those two institutions to take concerted action aimed at restoring peace and stability to the region. At the same time, we hope that the Government of the Central African Republic will make an effort to improve relations with its neighbours.

Finally, I would like to say that in principle China supports and endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General to strengthen BONUCA and revise its mandate. We hope that BONUCA, while comprehensively implementing the strategy to consolidate peace, will pay due attention to priorities and that it will assist, and work in coordination with, the Government of the Central African Republic so as to fulfil the mandate given to it by the Security Council in an organized manner. China will, as always, support the efforts of BONUCA and of General Cissé.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): Through you, Mr. President, I thank the Secretary-General for his extremely informative report on the situation in the Central African Republic. The representative of Belgium will be speaking later on behalf of the European Union, and my delegation would like to associate itself with what he will say, not least because it is as a member of the European Union that we are part of the international aid effort for the Central African Republic.

The Central African Republic is in many ways a paradigm of the sort of situation in which the efforts of the international community have to be directed towards post-conflict peace-building. And post-conflict peace-building will always require the participation not just of the political organs of the United Nations but of all parts of the United Nations system and, indeed, of the whole international community. In that context, it is very appropriate that we welcome, through you, Sir, not only Mr. Cissé, but also Mr. Calderisi, the representative of the World Bank.

Against that background, I should just like to offer a few thoughts on the sort of projects that the international community can usefully be undertaking in the Central African Republic, projects above all that will promote the stability of the country. For example, we think it is important that the international community should support the improvement of human rights protection, including the bringing to justice of those responsible for abuses during the recent coup attempt. We support attempts to improve good governance, and in that context we note that the European Commission is giving support on behalf of the European Union. We support assistance towards the resettlement of refugees, towards the disposal of illegally held weapons and towards human rights training for the police and the military. And finally, we support projects which are aimed at helping to restructure and professionalize the armed forces.

In that last context, I would refer to point (c) of paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report. We wonder whether it would be better, rather than expanding the armed forces through recruitment, to facilitate the reintegration of those forces who fled as a result of reprisals following the attempted coup.

The United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) is the natural channel for project management in the Central African Republic. In considering the future of BONUCA's mandate, we have noted very carefully the proposals that the Secretary-General has put forward for the expansion of BONUCA's activities. We feel that we should take a decision on this in due course, but it would be useful to have some more information in that context about the further resources that are likely to be required by BONUCA.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We in Russia are gravely concerned at the sharp political tension, the disruption of economic activity and the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic following the attempted coup by opposition forces in late May. We are further concerned at the close relationship between the crisis in the Central African Republic and the situation in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Russia believes that the political crisis that arose out of the attempted coup should be dealt with as soon as possible, and that efforts to consolidate peace, to attain national reconciliation and to strengthen the democratic mechanisms of power in the Central African Republic should be supported. In that connection, we welcome the work being done by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) to help efforts to consolidate the peace process and to attract international support for the country's recovery.

We call on the Central African Republic authorities to adhere strictly to democratic standards and norms as they investigate the circumstances of the attempted coup. The events of late May and early June must not be allowed to deepen inter-ethnic division in the Central African Republic. The refugees who left the country because of fears of ethnic persecution must be enabled to return home without fearing for their safety.

We agree with the main point of the Secretary-General's report relating to the need for urgent steps to establish a constructive dialogue in the Central African Republic between the country's authorities and the opposition. We are convinced that the absence of such dialogue, against the backdrop of social tension and a very difficult economic situation, could have the most dangerous consequences for the future of post-conflict recovery in the Central African Republic, and could lead to a situation in which the results of the international community's efforts over the past few years would be lost and reduced to naught. We

therefore appeal to the people of the Central African Republic, who bear primary responsibility for consolidating the peace process, to demonstrate political will and far-sightedness in the interest of national reconciliation and of the recovery of their country. Only with that approach can we expect the international community's efforts in the Central African Republic to yield good results.

In that light, we agree with the general thrust of the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General: to encourage political dialogue and national reconciliation and to restore the State and economic institutions of the Central African Republic so that they can function properly. But we believe too that a Security Council decision on this matter must come after the budgetary implications of restructuring the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic are submitted to the Council and after a review of the Office's mandate.

Mr. Amin (Bangladesh): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting on a situation that requires continued Council attention and engagement.

I shall first address issues of direct and immediate concern to the Security Council. I refer to regional threats to peace and security in the Central African Republic. As the Secretary-General reports, putschists who have fled the country have taken refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is an embattled country, and it would not be difficult for them to mobilize resources to cross the border and threaten Bangui. The Council should take the steps at its disposal to secure the apprehension of the chief instigators of the coup attempt, or at least to prevent them from infiltrating. We are told also that some of the putschists are present among the refugees, which makes the situation and the threat still more serious.

We have also been informed about the proliferation of arms in the subregion, in particular in the areas bordering Equateur province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, controlled by the Front de libération du Congo (FLC) and the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo (MLC) of Jean-Pierre Bemba. I believe that the Council will have to find ways and means to address this threat.

The Central African Republic is now in a situation of crisis that requires an immediate increase in the levels of external assistance. That is the central message that my delegation reads in the report of the Secretary-General. The situation is described in terms of sharp political tension, further economic decline, simmering social tension and a troubling lack of security. The question before us as the Security Council is what we can and should do. We recognize, of course, that these socio-economic and political aspects are not strictly within the Council's competence, and that is why, in our last presidential statement, the Council called upon the other relevant actors — in particular, the Bretton Woods institutions — to consider the special situation in the Central African Republic.

We are encouraged to note from the World Bank representative that some $17 million have been allocated for HIV/AIDS. That responds to a very urgent need. We have also noted the intention of the World Bank to provide $8 million for poverty eradication. However, we are deeply disturbed to learn that the World Bank has suspended disbursements to the Government of the Central African Republic for non-payment of amounts due. This is not a criticism of the World Bank; possibly that amount is due. What we are concerned about is to find alternative resources for the survival of a very fragile Government.

We would like to know from our briefers whether there is any scope for salvaging the situation. We are thinking of quick-impact projects that have been prescribed in other, similar situations. With the national debt of Bangladesh in mind, I would think of micro-credit programmes. The World Bank has adopted this concept as an institution. We would like to know from Mr. Calderisi of any thoughts in that direction.

Given the situation in the Central African Republic, clearly there is need for greater coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, relevant funds, programmes and agencies and, of course, the Bretton Woods institutions, whose participation we are privileged to have today.

Possibly the needs of the Central African Republic are not enormous. I have added up different requirements in the Secretary-General's report, and I believe they come to something like $112 million. In the context of a nation, that should not be enormous; it should not be too high an amount for the international community.

I wanted to support the different projects that the United Kingdom recommended, along with those to

which we have referred. The assistance of the international community, as Ambassador Hume underlined, would much depend on the demonstration of commitment by the Government. I believe the Government will take this message seriously from this Council meeting.

To conclude, we support the Secretary-General's proposal for strengthening the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). We will support the Secretary-General in any further strengthening of the Office so that General Lamine Cissé can have the possibility to exercise greater authority and influence in order to secure the necessary support and cooperation for the pressing peace-building needs of the Central African Republic — including, of course, the commitment of the Government.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): I join others in thanking the Representative of the Secretary-General, General Cissé, and Mr. Calderisi for their excellent briefings.

I wish to make only three brief points. First, in paragraph 29 of his report, the Secretary-General has made specific proposals on the areas where the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) could be strengthened, and for the extension of its mandate for another year. While we are fully supportive of these proposals, we would like to caution that any decision to strengthen BONUCA should be commensurate with its ability to achieve tangible results. In other words, BONUCA must be given the capacity to carry out a strengthened mandate effectively. Otherwise, we run the risk of damaging its credibility should it fail to meet the expectations on the ground.

Secondly, even as we work toward political reconciliation, we must also focus on the root causes of the problem. The Council addressed these areas in its presidential statement of 17 July 2001. I need not repeat them, but we would like to encourage the international community to include, in its assistance packages to the Central African Republic, training in the form of technical and management expertise. In our view, this would lay the foundation for the long-term economic viability of the country.

Finally, we need to consider the consequential effects of the presence of refugees in the Central African Republic over the long term. It is already in a precarious economic situation. That it should also bear the burden of hosting refugees from its neighbours in the region only adds to this precarious situation. In fact, the Secretary-General has pointed out that there is a sort of inter-refugee problem faced by the region as a whole, and this is a threat to the security of the subregion. We urge that efforts to address this problem also be treated as a matter of high priority.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): First, I would like to thank the presidency for arranging this public meeting and to join others in thanking General Cissé and Mr. Calderisi for their very helpful briefings today.

Belgium will speak shortly on behalf of the European Union, and my delegation associates itself fully with that statement. I shall add a few brief comments in a national capacity.

The interest of the international community in assisting the Central African Republic is not only moral but clearly strategic. The country lies at the heart of an unstable region where conflicts, as we know, readily spill over borders. The consequences of conflict in one country can have a profound impact on the stability of the others. It is, therefore, as the Ambassador of the Ukraine said earlier, very much a test case in terms of the effectiveness of the United Nations response and how we assume that responsibility.

As General Cissé has emphasized strongly, and as is clearly echoed in the report of the Secretary-General, the economy is clearly in a very fragile state. This has been exacerbated by the coup attempt. The Council, in its presidential statement of 17 July 2001, called on the Bretton Woods institutions take into account the specific nature of the situation in the Central African Republic.

My delegation was heartened to hear the outline of the current efforts by the World Bank. Two points struck me that go to the heart of the point made by Bangladesh and others: when tackling a level of extreme poverty such as exists in the Central African Republic, it is very difficult to separate the various elements at play — political, military, security — especially in the context of extreme poverty.

In his report the Secretary-General uses the phrase "a duty of solidarity" of development partners and the international community, which is a strong but accurate phrase. One point which does emphasize that,

I think, is the reference in the report to the impacts — in terms of administrative capacity and the managerial structures in the public service — of the recruitment freeze required by previous structural adjustment programmes. According to the Secretary-General, that has clearly led to a very severe shortage of managers in the public service. Many are approaching retirement age.

This is not a small point, because the Secretary-General refers very clearly to extreme institutional weaknesses in the State, to the point where the Central African Republic has been unable to use even donor credits, including from the European Development Fund, although — as was said in the report — the European Union has now made arrangements in terms of the ninth European Development Fund or previous European Development Funds.

The point of conclusion on this is the reference that was made, to quote the exact phrase used by the Secretary-General, to the need for extreme solicitude by the international community and the donor community, including the multilateral institutions, and perhaps especially including the Bretton Woods institutions.

There is clearly a point of competences here, which my delegation fully appreciates. I also fully appreciate the positive summary that we were given this morning by the World Bank. It is a point of emphasis, but it is one that clearly comes across in the report, and therefore the forthcoming donor conference future coordination efforts will clearly be important.

In conclusion, to mention briefly two points, one is the current political situation. My delegation fully agrees that, even as we emphasize the importance of challenging issues of extreme poverty and the current very gloomy economic situation, it is also important that the Central African Republic address the root causes of the crisis politically, particularly weak governance. It must re-establish political dialogue, which is an indispensable condition for a functioning political democratic system. The lack of dialogue clearly can only sustain a vacuum, which in turn breeds instability.

My delegation also agrees with the points made by Ambassador Hume of the United States on the importance of the issue of the forthcoming trials of coup leaders. The international community will clearly be looking closely at transparency, openness and other factors there, and also at the issue of the return of refugees in the same context.

Finally, in terms of the Secretary-General's specific proposals, Ireland very much welcomes the proposal to strengthen the role of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), including, as has been emphasized by General Cissé, in the areas of human rights, promotion of political dialogue, civil society and so on. In this the Secretary-General will have — we hope — the full support of the Council, and certainly my delegation fully supports the proposals made.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): I am also grateful for the two briefings. I will only make three points regarding the work of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA).

First, we share the concern of the Special Representative that political dialogue no longer seems to be on the agenda. We agree with the recommendations in the report aimed at strengthening BONUCA's mandate in bringing about political dialogue and national reconciliation.

Secondly, the report states that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and BONUCA will pay special attention to the human rights situation and take appropriate steps to improve the situation. We support this prioritization of human rights. Norway believes that the promotion and protection of human rights are among the most important elements in BONUCA's mandate.

Thirdly, we strongly support the efforts of BONUCA to strengthen the national capacity to enforce the rule of law and facilitate the disarmament and restructuring of the defence and security forces. We commend the Government for appointing a minister responsible for restructuring the defence and security forces.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): My delegation is very grateful to General Cissé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing and for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic. We are also thankful to Mr. Calderisi, Country Director of the World Bank, for his briefing on what the World Bank is doing to alleviate the problems of the Central African Republic.

It is now almost eight months since we discussed the Central African Republic in this Chamber. It is regrettable that there has been little positive development in the situation there over that period. On the contrary, the country experienced turbulent events — an attempted coup — during the month of May, which has further aggravated its already precarious situation. We are very concerned that a large number of Central Africans who were directly or indirectly involved in the coup attempt have fled the country. We strongly condemn all coup attempts and believe that their perpetrators should be brought to justice.

But we are equally concerned about reports of unfair treatment being given to one particular ethnic group. We call on the Government of the Central African Republic to create the necessary environment for the return of these people and for eventual reconciliation.

My delegation believes that the grim economic situation prevailing in the Central African Republic is one of the root causes of the problems in that country. The difficulty in paying the salaries of the military and of civil servants, combined with the social tension and insecurity, is leading not only to an exodus but to an important "brain drain".

There is a need for enhanced effort by the international community to assist in the economic recovery of the country. In this respect, we appeal to all of those States that made pledges at the special donor meeting in New York in May 2000 to fulfil them. The current situation in the country also merits particular attention on the part of the Bretton Woods institutions. We are hopeful that the forthcoming meeting set for 24 September in Paris will bring concrete solutions to the macro-economic difficulties of the Central African Republic.

Economic recovery of the Central African Republic cannot hold on its own; it can be sustained only through real progress in capacity-building. Efforts should be aimed at the strengthening of democratic institutions, good governance and accountability by the Government. We also urge the Government to invest heavily in education and training.

We note that the system in place in the country has not led to the optimum utilization of human resources in the administrative and financial sectors of the Government. We therefore fully support the recommendations of the Secretary-General calling for high-level experts in the field of administration and finance from the Central African Republic's international partners to assist the Government.

In this respect, the Council could recommend the appropriate United Nations agency, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to provide the necessary framework to facilitate the supply of competent experts. This would help not only in the short term but also in training the financial and administrative cadres of the Central African Republic to efficiently shoulder their responsibilities in future.

We fully concur with the observation made by the Secretary-General in his report that there is a potential risk of illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons from the region. We agree equally with his remarks on the need to address the security aspect of the Central African Republic and in particular the structuring of its defence and security forces.

While we agree that all necessary assistance must be provided to the country in improving its security, it is equally vital that the Government engage in a permanent and regular dialogue with the countries of the region in order to sustain peace not only in the country but also in the region through confidence-building measures.

My delegation pays tribute to the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) for its role in strengthening peace in the Central African Republic. We support the recommendations to strengthen BONUCA in terms of both human and financial resources, so as to enable it to contribute to encouraging political dialogue and national reconciliation and to the monitoring and respect of human rights — especially under present circumstances, after the failed coup attempt — and to provide the appropriate support to the mobilization of resources for economic reconstruction.

We are aware that financial implications for strengthening BONUCA's mandate will come into play, but we should not forget that hesitation on our part might lead to the aggravation of the problem in the Central African Republic. We therefore fully support the recommendation to strengthen BONUCA as well as the extension of its mandate for another year.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Central

African Republic and the briefing by General Cissé. The report is sobering, yet it impels us and the international community as a whole to be more committed to the aims of post-conflict peace-building and economic recovery in the Central African Republic. We cannot allow the gains achieved so far to be eroded and the society to slide into conflict and chaos.

The Jamaican delegation has asserted time and again the importance of an effective peace-building strategy that embraces a fully integrated programme involving the United Nations and its organs, the Bretton Woods institutions and, where necessary, regional organizations. A successful peace-building strategy must include indispensable elements, such as programmes promoting democratic governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law and justice, and sustainable economic and social development. Let me emphasize the need for emerging democracies in post-conflict situations to have sustained programmes that foster long-term economic prosperity and social development.

I was impressed by the observation made by Mr. Calderisi that the Prime Minister and his colleagues have kept their sights trained on medium- and long-term issues, which will be important for strengthening growth and reducing poverty. The Secretary-General referred to these efforts to bring about economic recovery as courageous. Such commitments deserve the support of the international community.

It is in that context that we are concerned that the situation in the Central African Republic since the failed coup in May of this year has been marked by sharp political tensions, further economic decline and a troubling lack of security. We commend the efforts made thus far by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) to bring about political dialogue and reconciliation among the parties. The report outlines the formidable challenges faced by the Government of the Central African Republic and its administrative and technical institutions, as well as the lack of access to overseas funding. This situation is an untenable one that has the potential to erode the very economic and social fabric of the society.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his report, it is regrettable that the response of the international community is not yet commensurate with the challenges faced by the people of the Central African Republic; and more so that the policies and conditionalities imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions have had a negative effect on the development of the Central African Republic. My delegation has in the past cautioned against the possible negative effects of structural adjustment programmes, which often follow old prescriptions while not taking into consideration the special conditions present in post-conflict peace-building situations. The Bretton Woods institutions are important partners in post-conflict peace-building, and hence in conflict prevention. They must assume a constructive role. We join the appeal made by others to these institutions to take into account the specific nature of the case of the Central African Republic in the implementation of programmes with the Government.

The regional dimension of the crisis is also of paramount importance. The flow of weapons across the porous borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo poses a direct threat to the peace-building efforts in the Central African Republic. That is further exacerbated by the flow of refugees from the Central African Republic into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All this points to the fact that sustainable peace in the Central African Republic remains a distant reality. Much needs to be done.

The Secretary-General has made a number of proposals for strengthening the role of BONUCA. My delegation stands ready to support consideration of those proposals.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank General Lamine Cissé, Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), for his statement and for being here today. We also express our gratitude for the statement made by Mr. Robert Calderisi of the World Bank. We listened to his briefing with great interest because we realize that he has the difficult job of supporting, with rather limited resources, the political and economic recovery in that country.

The report of the Secretary-General has been most revealing with regard to the scope of the current pressing needs of the Central African Republic. Those needs are related to the very functioning of the State

and its ability to foster the well-being of its 4 million inhabitants and to the political entente needed for the country to overcome its difficulties.

In fact, the situation raises a serious question about the will of the international community to support peace-building in countries emerging from conflict. It is clear that the United Nations cannot be absent from such a situation and that it should, with the means at its disposal, extend assistance to the Government of the Central African Republic to promote a climate of national reconciliation and to channel the efforts of foreign donors towards the country's economic reconstruction.

We would like the report to be submitted by the Secretariat to the Security Council at the end of the year to clearly reflect the contribution that regional and subregional organizations and the donor community are making to meet the urgent needs of the Central African Republic.

We would like to emphasize the important mission that the Representative of the Secretary-General is carrying out in the political sphere. Members of the Council trust that his ability to communicate with the authorities in Bangui and with the country's political organizations will continue to guide the work of the United Nations and make it possible for us to assess the prospects for peace and development.

We hope that the United Nations will continue to promote human rights in the country and to provide humanitarian assistance to the people who have become refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the recent attempted coup d'état.

It is for all of these reasons that we support the proposal of the Secretary-General to strengthen BONUCA's mandate. We are prepared to consider a longer-term presence in the country.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of France.

I would first like to thank General Lamine Cissé for his presence here, for his presentation and, above all, for the work he has done since arriving in Bangui on 29 July with General Amadou Toumani Touré. Outstanding work has been done since the end of July to help the Central African Republic and Central Africans to deal with the disastrous consequences of the attempted coup d'état of 28 May.

I would also like to thank the representative of the World Bank, Mr. Robert Calderisi, for being here and for his statement. It is both good and essential that the Bretton Woods institutions be involved in our work and in our deliberations. I think this is an example that should inspire us when we deal with other items before us.

In a case such as that of the Central African Republic, we cannot deal with the political and military aspects separately from the economic situation. We must be able to have a global approach. The representative of the European Union, the Ambassador of Belgium, will speak on behalf of the 15 members of the European Union; so, I shall limit my statement to four brief remarks.

My first remark concerns the regional dimension of the Central African crisis. Ambassador Christine Lee quite rightly spoke of refugees that have come from the neighbouring countries of Congo, Rwanda, Chad and the Sudan, further upsetting a fragile society. I would like to mention another consequence of the crisis in a neighbouring country: the closing of the Oubangui river, a river that enabled a more or less adequate provisioning of necessities, including oil. The Central African Republic is obviously the victim of a crisis that has stricken all of Central Africa.

My second remark concerns the commitment of the international community. In the context I have just mentioned, it is absolutely necessary and good that, in spite of the disappointing recent months, the Bretton Woods institutions, primarily the World Bank, remain committed to the Central African Republic.

The third remark concerns the responsibility of the Central African authorities. If the international community can and must assist, nothing can or will be done if the Central African authorities do not commit themselves to a policy of national reconciliation and realistic economic development, giving priority to joint efforts with financial donors, but first and foremost, to national dialogue.

We welcome the progress already achieved in this field, especially the resumption of dialogue with the trade unions. We encourage the Central African authorities to give a strong political signal in order to reassure the population and to permit the return of the

refugees to their country. We feel that the establishment of a genuine dialogue among all the political forces, as well as completion of the disarmament process and the continuation of the restructuring of the armed forces, are absolutely necessary.

My final comment concerns the role of the United Nations. France, too, unreservedly supports the strengthening proposed for the United Nations Peace-building Support Office (BONUCA), especially in the area of monitoring human rights and early warning. We think that one of the lessons we have learned in recent years from our experience in Central Africa is that, after a major effort that was crowned with success, we withdrew the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) as planned, but perhaps we reduced the international presence excessively by going from almost everything to close to nothing, perhaps we did too much. We should draw a lesson from past episodes and, in fact, strengthen BONUCA.

From this standpoint, I propose a rather symbolic gesture, which has the advantage of having no cost: recognize General Cissé's accomplishments by giving him the title of, not simply "the Representative", but "the Special Representative" of the Secretary-General. We could make this proposal to Kofi Annan. It is a proposal that will both recompense the unequalled action performed by the Representative and will encourage him in his dialogue with the Central African authorities.

As today's meeting draws to a close, a rather broad agreement has emerged around this table to take note of the main recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report. To implement these recommendations, a decision of the Security Council will be necessary. In the light of discussions to date and consultations in our Council, we will discuss the possible contents of a presidential statement in order to respond to the completely legitimate request of Ambassador Granovsky. I would ask the Secretariat to prepare for us a budgetary cost estimate for the desired strengthening of BONUCA.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belgium. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the associated countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union welcomes the attention the Security Council has sought to give to the current situation in the Central African Republic. The international community must maintain its focus on that country, which lies in the heart of Central Africa and is beset by numerous political, economic, social and security problems. The report just presented to us by the Secretary-General's Representative, Mr. Cissé, has provided us with some interesting ideas and concrete recommendations to help this country to overcome those problems.

I would also like to thank Mr. Calderisi for presenting to us an account of the activities of the World Bank in the Central African Republic in the months to come.

Like the other countries of Central Africa, the Central African Republic has not been spared the transnational scourges that have afflicted the region for several years. The effects of the conflicts on neighbouring countries are acutely felt; they include the proliferation of small arms that fuels insecurity and organized crime. Today, the Central African Republic is host to thousands of refugees from many countries, while thousands of its citizens have fled to Congo-Brazzaville and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the Secretary-General has indicated, the fact that the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the situation in the Central African Republic are closely interlinked is particularly worrying. The international community must establish a global strategy to address the numerous, closely interconnected regional problems.

The international community must continue its efforts to assist the Central African Republic. Multidimensional assistance programmes, both bilateral and multilateral, are indispensable. The international community made a vital contribution towards stabilizing the country and restoring law and order after the mutinies of 1996 and 1997. First, it set up an Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Bangui

Agreements (MISAB) and later a United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), both hailed as successes.

The United Nations cannot now fail in the process of consolidating peace. BONUCA has a central role to play in this effort, as have a number of players, foremost among whom are the President and the Government of the Central African Republic, democratically elected following the legislative and presidential elections prepared and held under the aegis of the United Nations.

The European Union attaches particular importance to the achievement of genuine national reconciliation and supports BONUCA's efforts to intensify political dialogue. The absence of a true dialogue generates tensions that can rapidly produce explosive situations, as was the case last May. The European Union unconditionally condemned the attempted coup and asked the parties to commit themselves to political dialogue and to respect the constitutional order, the rule of law and human rights. Another aspect of national reconciliation is peaceful understanding between the various components of society. The Central African Government must take every measure within its power to bring an end to all acts of violence inspired by ethnic hatred.

The European Union is prepared to continue to provide assistance to the Central African Republic. Following the crisis last May, the European Union provided immediate financial support of 1 million euros to cover the food and health requirements for six months of around 80,000 displaced residents of Bangui and to help them to return to and resettle in their areas of origin.

The European Union has also provided 11.5 million euros in the form of budgetary support. It is currently discussing with the Central African authorities, and in close coordination with the international financial institutions, the arrangements for a second payment. That should be dependent on compliance with the undertakings to implement macroeconomic reforms, particularly the sound management of public finance, as agreed by the Central African Republic with the Bretton Woods institutions.

In the medium term, the European Union is in discussion with the Central African Republic to devise jointly a support strategy to include continued support for the economic reform programme, taking into account in particular social sectors such as health and education. In this respect, we call on the Government of the Central African Republic to submit detailed and realistic projects to its development aid partners.

In conclusion, the European Union supports BONUCA's activities and those of Special Representative Cissé. We hope that the reinforcement of BONUCA, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report, will help to accelerate the process of economic and political recovery in the Central African Republic.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I realize that it is late on a Friday evening and I will therefore address only five points in my country's statement on the report of the Secretary-General.

First, I entirely agree that the process of restructuring the armed forces and the collection of the small arms that are circulating in the country must become a special priority in the efforts of the international community in the immediate term. We cannot expect the Central African Republic to achieve political, economic or social recovery without being able to eliminate its security problems. We therefore ask donor Governments and institutions to respond to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, to contribute generously in financing the programmes prepared by the Government for this purpose and to provide the requisite military and technical expertise to guarantee their successful implementation. In this context, I cannot but express the hope that the response of the international community to these requirements will be more forthcoming than that received by the Government when it presented its programmes in this field to the special meeting held in New York in May 2000.

Secondly, the international community must also focus its attention on addressing the humanitarian crisis facing the Central African Republic, as evidenced by the displacement of large numbers of civilians inside the country and across its borders and by the even larger numbers of refugees who flocked to its territory from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Chad, Sudan and Rwanda. Some may say that the presence of such a large number of refugees from all these countries only demonstrates that the

Central African Republic is still an oasis of stability in a region plagued by armed conflicts and ethnic strife. Donor Governments and institutions, however, must accept that the Government of President Patassé has neither the necessary capacity nor the adequate resources to provide for the needs of these refugees and that the entire international community has a special responsibility towards them.

Thirdly, the Government of the Central African Republic had previously prepared a number of emergency plans to overcome the humanitarian, economic and social repercussions of the coup attempt. It has also taken a number of encouraging steps to resume its dialogue with the trade unions and drafted a series of important laws to attract foreign investments. While all these measures are, from our point of view, extremely positive, given the difficult circumstances the country is going through and the prevalence of extreme poverty among its population, we unfortunately find that the international community is still hesitant in mobilizing the financial resources and other forms of assistance that the country requires to address the enormous challenges, which are only increasing day by day. While we welcome the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General to send economic and financial experts to the institutions of the Government and to develop the country's agricultural sector, as well as other important proposals, we must also reiterate that the Central African Republic will never be able to emerge from the vicious cycle in which it finds itself in the absence of sufficient external financial inflows, the implementation of large-scale development programmes on its territory and the alleviation of the enormous debt burden that paralyses its ability to meet the daily requirements of its people, including the payment of salaries and arrears to state employees, as the international community has continuously called for.

Fourthly, Egypt welcomes the expanded role proposed by the Secretary-General for the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic, especially in promoting the process of national reconciliation between the Central African parties, supporting the efforts of the Government to restructure the armed forces, training the security forces and promoting respect for human rights. We also especially look forward to strengthening the role that the Office can play in the field of early warning in a manner that will alert the United Nations and allow it to address developments that may threaten to return the country to the brink of disaster, as we witnessed last May. We hope, of course, that the Office will be provided with financial and human resources commensurate with the additional tasks and burdens that it will be assigned so that it may implement its mandate in the best possible manner.

Fifthly, the Secretary-General has highlighted in his report the direct interlinked relationship between the course of events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other neighbouring States, on the one hand, and the degree of stability that the Central African Republic may enjoy, on the other. We thus hope that the Security Council will take this important factor into account in the context of its efforts to restore peace in the Congo and to implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. We specifically hope that there will be an effective presence of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — once it is expanded and its third phase launched — in the Congolese territories adjacent to the Central African Republic. We also hope that the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating armed groups will encompass all of those elements that are located in Equateur Province, so that the threat posed by these elements to the Central African Republic can be removed once and for all.

Finally, Egypt was at the forefront of those countries that provided troops and equipment to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA); it was also among the first countries that was keen to continue its support — within its capabilities — to the Central African Republic in the post-conflict peace-building phase after MINURCA was completed. We thus hope that the international community will take this opportunity to reflect on what the situation in the country could have been just last May and on what we can now begin, through implementing and building upon the Secretary-General's recommendations, to assist the Central African Republic in reaching the path that it deserves towards lasting peace and stability.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Representative of Egypt for the key role that his country has played in achieving progress in the Central African Republic.

I shall now ask Mr. Lamine Cissé and then Mr. Robert Calderisi to present their concluding comments.

Mr. Cissé (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank all those who have congratulated and encouraged me as Representative of the Secretary-General. I would like to touch upon various issues, focusing on points of interest. I shall begin with human rights.

The human rights bureau of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) is very important, particularly in the post-conflict period, and more so in a country that has just experienced an aborted coup attempt that has brought about some actions with ethnic connotations. Currently, the bureau does monitoring and intervention. It is very vigilant and highly sought after. People come to the bureau to express their grievances or they write to BONUCA, through the bureau, to report abuses. The bureau has access to the entire judicial branch in the country. It can go to see judges and it can turn to the police and the gendarmerie. The Government is aware of this. That bureau is swamped right now. Some of the grievances are not justified. This is why we always try to be very calm and discerning in our work.

I shall now turn to the strengthening of the bureau, as requested in the presidential statement of 17 July, in which the Council called for the strengthening of human rights monitoring and the implementation of early-warning machinery.

On the question of resources, while we wait for a response to the request for a budgetary assessment, I would like to provide some data on the strengthening of the bureau. There will be three additional specialists — jurists, of course — who will be working in the bureau so that it can provide legal assistance. In other words, a person may seek to bring an action and if we see that it involves a human rights violation in some way, the bureau will have the capacity to provide him assistance in prosecution.

Secondly, the actions of the bureau can be decentralized by strengthening activities in the field, in the provinces where there are departmental and provincial courts, so that the bureau can also continue to monitor human rights inside the territory. This also applies to the early-warning section and others to which I referred in my introduction.

I would like to address now the trial relating to the coup d'état of 28 May. The Office in Bangui wants the assessment of that event to be carried out in a transparent manner. I would like to point out that the United Nations Office in Bangui is highly respected, because the Government knows that we represent not only international opinion but also international institutions and the international community, first and foremost, the United Nations. So the reports that we prepare are of great interest to the Government of the Central African Republic. The president has entered into certain commitments recently and has asked that those involved in the 28 May coup d'état be dealt with in an exclusively legal manner.

Concerning political and trade union dialogue, political dialogue, as indicated in my report, no longer existed between the opposition and the presidential movement. As soon as we got to Bangui we met all political parties, which had formed movements that shared ideologies. For example, there is what we call the Group of Six, at the far left, the Group of Nine and the presidential movement. All these political actors agree that dialogue must resume.

For some time now there has been a legal investigative commission, which, it must be said, somewhat impedes the resumption of dialogue, in the sense that some people get cold feet easily and await the conclusions of that commission. I can announce to you that the commission has concluded part of its work and was to furnish its conclusions last week to the public prosecutor's office. Its mandate has been extended for two months, in order to try to see other phenomena related to the coup d'état. Now, the public prosecutor's office can proceed to undertake these trials. We think that, once that starts, the political dialogue could be resumed.

As far as the social dialogue with the trade unions is concerned, we did address the Minister for the Civil Service and brought together all of the trade unions in the country at a working meeting. After that meeting and after the meeting that they held with the Minister for the Civil Service, the dialogue was resumed. It will be recalled that trade unions utilized an arbitration commission for some months. That union had made a statement. All trade unions supported the negotiating group, and the dialogue was restarted in that respect.

A regional approach has frequently been mentioned. The Great Lakes region now extends, it is true, to the territory of the Central African Republic. No security problem can be addressed in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo without its having an influence on the Central African Republic.

Here let me say that when the Minister was appointed, one who deals exclusively with restructuring, we met with him and decided that the funds now in the United Nations Development Programme would make it possible to begin to collect weapons and to study restructuring, which had been halted since the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). A committee was set up, and I think that in coming days we will see how we can make the population aware. As I said, many civilians have been armed since the last coup d'état, in addition to soldiers, police, etc. We will commence that disarming without delay. In any case, we will undertake some activities in that area as quickly as possible.

With regard to refugee returns, I can say that appeals have been made by the Government for refugees to return to Central Africa. Several appeals have been made. We ourselves have made proposals to the President, who agreed with them. He has made several statements, of which that of 17 September is the most recent. It is a presidential communiqué in which he calls upon his compatriots to trust the committee of inquiry and to address any information to it, rather than to him personally. He has made that appeal several times now.

The defence and security forces in the Central African Republic have dwindled somewhat, in terms of both human and material resources. For example, the army, which had 3,500 men, has only about 2,000 now. There are more than 1,000 militia across from Bangui, in Zongo, including 10 or 12 officers. Appeals have been made, and some refugees have timidly begun to return. Fear is really what holds them back, more than anything else. I think that more appeals and more confidence will lead to the return of a greater number. Already, some deputies have rejoined the assembly.

I will conclude with refugees. In the Central African Republic there are 24,250 refugees. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo there are 23,000, in Zongo and in the neighbouring town of Libenge; in Congo-Brazzaville there are some 1,250, in Bétou. But there are 48,870 refugees in the Central African Republic. There are 370 Rwandan Hutus, including 19 officers, and approximately 1,500 Chadians in the north and in Bangui. There are 35,000 Sudanese and 2,000 Congolese from Kinshasa in a UNHCR site. There are some 10,000 urban refugees. I could perhaps say that the Central African Republic is a spillway of the unsolved problems in the neighbouring countries which create specific problems within the Republic.

Regarding to refugees located near Bangui, UNHCR has worked with MONUC. The survey has been carried out and there is a plan to take them 50 kilometres from the border.

We are going to try to revive an already existing committee that was to study the reopening of the Ubangi River. As the President said, the closure of the Ubangi has caused disasters in the Central African Republic, because three quarters of the trade was transported on the Ubangi, and the remainder went by land to Cameroon — more than 1,500 kilometres on a very poor road. We are trying to contact the individuals involved, including Mr. Bemba, who controls that area. If the Ubangi is opened, we think the economic situation can be improved.

I think I have touched, quite briefly, on some of the problems that have come up in the discussion.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Mr. Calderisi.

Mr. Calderisi: Very briefly, I would like to refer to the question which the representative of Bangladesh posed about the current situation with regard to suspending the disbursements of the World Bank to the Central African Republic.

We can, in fact, make arrangements occasionally to solve this more quickly than might otherwise be true. We did, late last year in a similar situation, take special steps to release $5 million of budget support in December and waved, in part, the conditions for its disbursement. That was instrumental, I believe, in helping the Government meet the civil service salaries for Christmas and the New Year.

In the current situation we are fairly optimistic about having those arrears cleared soon. In the future, if the situation arises, we can certainly consider making exceptions for humanitarian projects like the HIV/AIDS project, where we will very much argue that once approved by the Board, it should be immune from the application of our rules on disbursements.

But we do still need to ensure some good order in the settlement of payments to the Bank group, because, as you know, the funds for Africa come entirely from about 30 Governments in the world. We are custodians of those funds and need to manage them in a way that will bring confidence to the donors and, of course, to the international community.

To end on a positive note, while we agree that limits to administrative capacity are affecting the Central African Republic, we do not regard them as the principal obstacle to progress. We think that, as in other African countries, there is much more capacity than meets the eye. Better governance will release some of that capacity, attract it back from overseas and allow the country and African institutions, we hope, to decide on a programme of technical assistance which will be as small and as targeted as possible as a supplement for what the country itself cannot provide.

Thank you again, Mr. President, for letting us be with you again today.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank Mr. Calderisi most warmly for his brief but optimistic comments which will better end our meeting.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of this matter.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.